

Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
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June 9, 2006

A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

ACHIEVE HEALTHY, DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTING HABITATS

Columbian White-tailed Deer: Efforts to increase the stability of the population of endangered Columbian white-tailed deer in the lower Columbia River watershed continue. A recent translocation of these deer to upstream islands was successfully accomplished.

Biologists from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and WDFW, along with highly experienced volunteers from Kitsap Bow hunters and Eyes in the Woods, cooperated in this endeavor. Ten white-tailed deer from Puget Island in Washington were transported upstream to Fisher and Hump Islands. Five additional deer were moved to the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge from Puget Island. Fourteen deer from the Wodson area in Oregon were moved upstream to Lord, Walker, and Crimms Islands in Oregon.

The captures involved both a helicopter and crew on the ground to funnel the deer into nets located in cottonwood plantations. Crews at the nets immediately untangle the deer and apply eye masks and hobbles and place them in bags for aerial transport to the receiving islands. Veterinarians from both Washington and Oregon monitor each deer to insure their health and safety.

Once on the receiving island, each deer is inspected and released. Monitoring of the deer continues using infrared cameras in Washington. Thanks to all involved in this project.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-WDFW Land Exchange: The Real Estate Services Section held a pre-bid conference in Olympia attended by WDFW and DNR staff and the prospective appraisal firms who have the qualifications to conduct the overall appraisal of lands in the exchange. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss timber cruise methodology, approaches to balancing the exchange values, "yellow book" appraisal requirements due to the federal grant funding, and approaches to allocating values among the various trusts. The plan is to try to complete the timber cruises and other appraisal work this summer and fall. Although preliminary exchange lines have been discussed, the actual boundary of lands to be traded will depend entirely on values determined through appraisal.

Columbia River Sea Lion Hazing Update - Washington/Oregon Hazing: Beginning April 2, 2006, the states of Oregon and Washington began an aggressive four-day on, four day off, in-river hazing effort from the downstream tips of Bradford and Cascade Islands about 12 miles to the area around Skamania Island. WDFW and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) hazing crews have received additional field support from tribal crews and Oregon State Police crews. The extra support has been very welcome and helpful.

The number of California sea lions in the vicinity of Bonneville Dam has declined as they have started their southern migration. The joint state/tribal hazing effort continued through May 23, 2006. Steller sea lions, which only represent a small percentage of the pinnipeds in the vicinity of Bonneville Dam, but were responsible for over 95% of the sturgeon kills, have not been observed since April 4, 2006. Recently, numerous sturgeon have been observed jumping in the river.

For the 2006 season, WDFW and ODFW staff observed 101 sturgeon kills to sea lions in the river below Bonneville Dam and the Army Corp of Engineers observed 233 sturgeon kills at Bonneville Dam through March 27, 2006. Of the 334 sturgeon that were taken mostly by Steller sea lions, at least 93 were oversize. Overall, the California sea lions continue to exhibit shy behavior, but have not reacted to hazing like the Steller sea lions.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Fish Passage Project Scoping: East Fork Issaquah Creek has been the focus of WDFW/WSDOT scoping efforts recently. One fish barrier site on Issaquah Creek is both unique and important. At mile 18.6 on I-90, East Fork Issaquah flows between the east and westbound lanes. In addition, the Williams Natural Gas Pipeline System crosses I - 90 and East Fork Issaquah Creek at the same location. A pipe culvert with concrete footings passes the pipeline over the creek within a large fill. Old, sackcrete streambed controls downstream of this culvert are failing causing a fish passage problem at the site and possible total failure of the culvert itself. Surveys upstream of this site reveal it is a very high priority barrier for correction, with a Priority Index of 52.62 (there are few problem culverts in the state with an index this high). Sockeye, Chinook, coho, steelhead, sea run cutthroat, and resident trout utilize the stream. TAPPS staff met with WSDOT engineers and Area Habitat Biologist Larry Fisher to present three conceptual design options to remedy this problem. Participants agreed that a complete replacement option was the best long-term solution, and this project should soon appear on the WSDOT 6 Year Plan for correction.

Tieton Forest Collaborative: Staff assisted with field tour and signing ceremony for the Tieton Forest Collaborative, a landscape scale initiative designed to create a cooperative effort across the dry forest environments on Oak Creek Wildlife Area and surrounding lands. Attending were Director Koenings, Commissioner of Public lands Sutherland, U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester, State Director of The Nature Conservancy, a Yakima County Commissioner, and many other staff from various organizations. Staff explained the importance of working together on this landscape initiative to accomplish mutual goals. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed.

Mount Saint Helens Elk Herd Plan: The draft Mount Saint Helens Elk Herd and Wildlife Area Plans were posted on the agency website on Friday, May 26. The Mount St. Helens Elk Herd Plan can be found at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/elk/sthelens.htm>. The Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Plan can be found at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans. Comments will be taken on the draft plans through July 15, 2006. Public meetings are scheduled for June 21 and June 28 in Longview and Vancouver respectively. The plans are scheduled for completion later this year.

Spotted Owl Management: The British Columbia Agriculture and Lands Minister announced Tuesday that the Province is immediately activating the Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, which will cost \$3.4 million over a 5 year period. Surveys and Forest Wildlife Unit Leader Joe Buchanan was a member of Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team that developed the plan. The implementation of the plan is of great value and relevance to Washington, as we both are experiencing an accelerated loss of owls with related causal factors and the northern range limit of the spotted owl is in lower central British Columbia.

Wreck of Catala: Oil was recently discovered to be onboard the vessel Catala that wrecked on Damon Point in Grays Harbor over 40 years ago. WDFW is working with Department of Ecology, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to develop a plan for safely removing the oil. Oil removal is being delayed out of concern for Snowy Plover and other shorebirds using Damon Point at this time of year for nesting and rearing their young.

Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA): Staff met with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to review several abandonment and restoration sites on the Elk River Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA). DNR has been successful in securing grant money to help with road abandonment and restoration efforts within the NRCA, and they have been very proactive in pushing projects forward. The proposed work will include abandoning several thousand feet of road with numerous fish-bearing stream crossings. Crossing removals and channel restoration will include the removal of two old bridge crossings on Andrews Creek and its west fork. These were some great projects and excellent planning on DNR's part.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Fish Passage Inventory Progress: The WDFW fish passage inventory of WSDOT stream-crossings has moved to eastern Washington and has been very productive. WSDOT barrier inventories have been completed in WRIAs 37 (309 highway miles), 41 (345 miles) and 40 (21 miles), and inventories are currently being conducted in WRIAs 36 and 31.

Wenatchee Watershed Planning Success: Seven years of hard work has finally paid off in the form a unanimously approved watershed plan for the Wenatchee basin. Fish and wildlife will benefit from the agreed minimum instream flows that better protect existing habitat. The watershed plan allows for future growth while acknowledging the fact that water (surface and groundwater) is limiting. The Planning Unit has also worked very closely with the salmon recovery effort, which is reflected in the habitat section of plan. We look forward to working with this group as they continue towards plan implementation.

Wolf Fork Timber Harvest Plan: Habitat staff met with Bennett Lumber officials to discuss an upcoming Forest Practices Application on Wolf Fork. Wolf Fork is a tributary to the Touchet River in Columbia County. This stream contains some of the last and best bull trout-spawning habitat in the Touchet system. Bennett Lumber obtained this section in a recent land exchange with DNR. During the exchange both WDFW and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) had expressed concern over the potential harvest of timber on this piece. Both agencies had also indicated interest in having this section, which borders the Umatilla National Forest, go to public ownership. Bennett Lumber made a commitment to work with us on any timber cut. Last week they made good on that commitment by asking to meet with WDFW and USFS personnel. From an afternoon of negotiation by Department personnel, Bennett Lumber agreed to leave 300-foot buffers on either side of the mainstem Wolf Fork. This is four times what a normal Forest Practices based cut would call for and is similar to what USFS would permit. Bennett Lumber, USFS and WDFW also agreed to actively pursue moving this parcel into public ownership within five years.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board: Staff attended the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) meeting in LaConner. The federal government will be funding \$16 million for salmon recovery efforts in the state for the 2006 grant cycle (7th Round). The SRFB adopted the proposal of 90% of available funding being distributed among eight regional areas, with 10% reserved for SRFB discretion. Each of the regions and lead entities will develop a process in which allocations will be divided within each region. The SRFB approved the WDFW programmatic request to fund the lead entity/watershed steward training scheduled for July 18-19. A Steering Committee was formed and met with representatives from the WSU/UW Policy Consensus Center. The training will give each of the lead entities the appropriate skills to help them work more effectively in each of their respective watersheds. This training will include elements of meeting management, sponsor outreach, communication and conflict resolution.

Seattle City Light Boundary Dam Relicensing: WDFW has been participating in the development of study plans to help address significant issues regarding fish-related impacts and data needs. Early fish studies proposed for 2006 will mainly focus on testing and determining effective sampling techniques, including sampling logistics and effectiveness with gillnets and biotelemetry in the tailrace and reservoir. WDFW is also participating in more comprehensive study proposals that are to be included in the preliminary study plan for implementation in 2007 and 2008. These include an array of fish and aquatic related studies as well as studies on wildlife related effects. This week, Seattle City Light submitted their Pre-Application Document to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The document is significant, and time for a comprehensive review is short.

King County Bear at Fraternity Row: While on patrol in Seattle, Officers received a call from the Washington State Patrol radio of a bear running around fraternity row at the University of Washington. The bear was located under a porch. It was tranquilized but, unfortunately, it ran off before the drug took complete effect (approximately 10 minutes time is needed). After finally being tranquilized a second time, and a 5 second ride on "the buffalo" (Taser), the bear was taken into custody. Unfortunately, the bear died at the scene presumably from the combination of Taser and tranquilizer.

Bear Attack in Forks: Officers responded to a 911 call regarding a bear attack upon a hunter near Forks. A group of hunters from the Puget Sound area were hunting bears under the depredation permit program and had been actively chasing a bear with their dogs since noon, but had been unsuccessful in getting the animal to tree. At about 4:00 p.m., one of the hunters got a shot at the bear, but it wasn't clear if it was wounded or not. Finally, about dusk, one of the hunters walked into the brush (without his gun) to find the dogs. Although the dogs were silent, they were very close to the bear, and the hunter was unaware that he had walked into where the very tired and angry (possibly wounded) animal was cornered. The bear grabbed the hunter by the arm, and dragged him down the hill and through the brush and timber. In the fray, the hunter was flopped around like a rag doll, fracturing his arm, and nearly twisting it off. Another hunter, who was armed, heard the commotion, and was able to run to the scene and shoot the bear, killing it. The victim hunter sustained a broken arm and wrist, bite wounds to the hip and legs, and several lacerations and contusions. None of the injuries appear to be life threatening.

Black Bear Captured in Downtown Bremerton: Officers responded early in the morning of Memorial Day to Bremerton where several residents near downtown had observed a Black Bear lurking about the neighborhood. The Officers located the bear, where it had climbed about 50 feet up into a tree. By the time the Officers arrived the media had gotten the story and were going live on TV with both ground crews and helicopters. The Officers set up a catch tarp under the tree, got on the roof of a nearby home to ensure the best shot, darted the bear and re-located it into the Olympic Mountains north and west of Shelton. The entire "text-book perfect" operation was caught on tape and televised live across western Washington. The Officers did an outstanding job!

Marine Power Generation: Another marine power generating project has been proposed. This one is proposing to put 100 to 300 generators in the vicinity of Deception Pass. The design of the generators for this project has not yet been determined. In the Tacoma Narrows, Tacoma Power is proposing constructing 60 generators north of the Tacoma Narrows bridges. The likely design is similar to a wind turbine, but placed deep enough that they would not impact shipping. It has been estimated that the blade tip speed would be 36 feet per second. We have expressed concerns about impacts to fish and to wildlife. Currently, little information is available regarding impacts in the marine environment from this type of project.

General Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) for Removal of Creosote-treated Piers, Pilings, Docks, and Debris: Staff biologists are actively engaged with the Department of Natural Resources to develop and implement a general HPA for removal of creosoted piers, pilings, docks, and beach debris. The removal program, funded as part of Governor Gregoire's efforts to clean up Puget Sound, will reduce one of the primary sources of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in Puget Sound. PAHs have been linked to significant (up to 100%) mortality of herring spawn and similar impacts to other forage fish species.

Kitsap Regional Council: Staff participated in this executive committee meeting to encourage local governments to develop an interlocal agreement for the Lead Entity organization and to adopt a more formal process for salmon recovery response to Shared Strategy and other emerging initiatives. The

request originated from the mayor of Bainbridge Island with technical support from Bainbridge planner Peter Namtvedt-Best, along with the East Kitsap Lead Entity coordinator, the Suquamish salmon recovery biologist, and WDFW's Watershed Stewardship Team member Doris Small. The request was well received and will move forward to the full council after the draft recommendation is finalized. This will improve East Kitsap representation in salmon recovery efforts by increasing local government participation (including a steering committee of elected local government officers) and allowing the Lead Entity to act independently from the County (beneficial to both the county and the Lead Entity). The Bainbridge mayor is working hard to raise the bar for salmon recovery planning with her counterparts in Kitsap County local governments.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Issues Rule Listing Green Sturgeon As Threatened: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's NMFS issued a Final Rule listing the Southern Distinct Population (DPS) segment of green sturgeon as threatened, effective July 6, 2006. WDFW researchers initiated a study three years ago in anticipation of a possible ESA listing; and the results from the ongoing studies will contribute to the development of recovery measures. NMFS is currently soliciting additional data and information from agencies and holding public hearings prior to July 5, 2006, in order to develop conservation measures and select critical habitat. Region 5 Sturgeon Projects staff have been working closely with NMFS managers to transfer fish location data gathered during the SWG funded Risk Assessment of Green Sturgeon in Washington project. WDFW has been promoting deployment, by federal and tribal agencies, of acoustic receivers in Washington's coastal estuaries to further understand migrational behavior of green sturgeon. A Mixed Stock Analysis (MSA) has been performed on genetic samples taken in Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, and the Columbia River estuary in order to assess the impacts of the listing on sport and commercial sturgeon fisheries. Preliminary results indicate that the Southern DPS comprises a substantial portion of the green sturgeon found in Washington waters. WDFW biologist, Olaf Langness, will present the MSA results at the AFS Western Division Meeting in Bozeman in June 2006.

Coyote Update in Region 4: King County fish and wildlife officers are finally winding down their efforts regarding the aggressive coyote in Eastgate. Complaints all but ceased entirely after lethal removal of what was believed to be the problem causing coyote. An additional male coyote was trapped and removed, for a total of two coyotes. Enforcement personnel attended a Bellevue City Council meeting to discuss this issue and other dangerous wildlife issues. The city council was very appreciative and impressed with our response and effectiveness. A vast majority of the community is also very pleased with our response; however, the Captain spent a large portion of the week responding verbally and in writing to animal rights activists who called and wrote expressing their criticism of our response, primarily the lethal removal of the two coyotes. Aggressive behavior, including attacks on children and adults, is perfectly acceptable to some.

Local Gill-Netter Loses Boat After Being Caught With ESA Protected Chinook: Officers were checking boats at a ramp near Cathlamet when a local gill-netter sped up to the ramp and met a vehicle at the water's edge. The Officers observed while the suspects threw several fish from the boat into the back of the pickup and then quickly drove away. Upon contact, the Officers found that they had been

attempting to smuggle away six wild Chinook salmon and an oversized Sturgeon. The gill-netter had been participating in the last commercial tangle-net fishery of this season. The tangle-net fishery was developed specifically to allow a selective fishing method for the safe release of wild Chinook and non-targeted sturgeon. The suspect's vessel and fishing gear were seized for forfeiture.

The Sport-Reward Fishery (Pikeminnow) Program Began Monday, May 1, 2006: The annual sport-reward northern pikeminnow removal program implemented by WDFW to reduce predation on Endangered Species Act listed and non-listed juvenile salmonids in the Columbia and Snake Rivers began its 16th season on May 1. The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funded program pays recreational anglers to harvest northern pikeminnow nine inches or larger from the lower Columbia River between the mouth and Priest Rapids Dam, and on the Snake River from the mouth to Hell's Canyon Dam. The program will offer anglers who harvest and turn in the predatory fish \$4 each for the first 100 northern pikeminnow; \$5 each for 101 to 400 pikeminnow; and \$8 each for northern pikeminnow in excess of 400 fish. Northern pikeminnow marked with spaghetti tags will continue to be worth \$500 each. Registration stations located downstream of the John Day Dam on the Columbia River opened May 1, 2006. Registration stations located above the John Day Dam opened two weeks later on May 15. The intent of the reward fishery is to reduce predation on juvenile salmonids by harvesting 10-20% of the northern pikeminnow population as part of BPAs' required salmon-enhancement activities under the 1980 Pacific Northwest Power Act. Anglers harvested more than 240,000 northern pikeminnow in 2005 and since 1990, the fishery has removed nearly 2.6 million northern pikeminnow from the Columbia and Snake rivers, resulting in an estimated 25% reduction in predation on juvenile salmon from pre-program levels.

PEOPLE GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Private Lands Access Update: The Commission asked the Department to provide periodic updates in June and December regarding progress or issues related to the new private lands access policy that was passed late last year. Since the policy and implementation are so new, there isn't much to report on yet. The greatest progress has been with the Landowner Hunting Permit program. We have one previous Private Lands Wildlife Management Area cooperator in the new program, Buckrun, and one new cooperator, the 4-O Cattle Company in Asotin County. Agency staff members are discussing additional agreements with landowners around Hanford and in the Columbia Basin. Recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has initiated Conservation Reserve Program re-enrollments, which will result in technical consultations with the Department's Private Lands Biologists and extensions of our habitat and access contracts with them. The Department will be prepared to give a comprehensive update on these issues at the Commission's December meeting.

2006 Big Game Hunting Season Pamphlets: The fall Big Game Pamphlets were shipped in late May. Pamphlets are available a little ahead of schedule this year, which should give hunters even more time to think about applying for permits. Hunters should be reminded that WDFW is switching over to a new license vendor, which may result in potential delays during the application process. Everyone should apply early. Special permit applications must be submitted by June 28, 2006.

WildWatchCam: Staff from the Animal Planet Channel contacted WildWatchCam project to discuss the use of images and perhaps coverage of the WildWatchCam project.

The South Puget Sound Wildlife Area Manager and WildWatchCam staff members are working with Washington Department of Corrections McNeil Island facility to install a fiber optic strand for the SealCam this summer. The installation may be part of a conservation mitigation effort on the island. A strand of fiber would allow for high-speed DSL or even a T-1 connection depending on need and funding. The SealCam has been troubled with many transmission problems, which this new installation could solve.

South Puget Sound Geoduck: The state and the Puyallup, Nisqually, and Squaxin Island Tribes have secured a three-year agreement to the South Puget Sound subtidal geoduck fishery. The total state and tribal annual average harvest in this regional fishery is approximately 1,900,000 pounds shared equally between the state and the tribes. This high-profile fishery has been operating without agreed plans since March 2003. The newly secured agreement includes provisions that address two major issues that have prevented the parties from reaching agreement in recent years, including: 1) an agreed plan to conduct post-harvest surveys on those tracts known or suspected to have been impacted from the illegal harvesting activities that occurred a few years ago to account for the subsequent reduction in the South Sound geoduck biomass; and 2) to proportionally distribute the state harvest based on standing stock biomass so a state harvest does not preclude any one tribe from up to 50% of its exclusive area harvest opportunity. Annual pre-season discussions will occur during the three-year plan term to update geoduck biomass and respective harvest shares.

Pig Ranch North of Moses Lake: It is suspected that ranchers are attempting to control coyote populations where livestock is present. A toxic substance known as Alicarb was mixed with balls of ground beef and spread along the owners' property and the boundary of the Gloyd Seeps Wildlife Area. The investigation was initiated after local pets became ill and died. One particular pet-owner retrieved one of the balls of contaminated meat from her dog and had it analyzed at the University of Idaho where the substance was found to be Alicarb. Officers initiated an investigation and located numerous dead wildlife carcasses in the wildlife area around the boundary with the pig ranch. These carcasses (dogs, ravens, magpies and coyotes) were packaged and sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, for analysis. Basin Officers investigated and identified an ex-employee of the ranch who resided in the Moses Lake area and interviewed the ex-employee. He confessed that last November and December he had assisted the ranch manager in preparing the substance for distribution by mixing it with the ground beef. He was not aware of what the substance was, but described it as small, black and granular. Subsequently, the ranch manager was interviewed and he also admitted his involvement. He advised that he did not know what the substance was, but that he had received it from the owner with instructions to mix with beef and distribute around the ranch boundary with the wildlife area. Officers then contacted the owner who admitted his role in the poisoning. He claimed he has lost nearly \$40,000 in livestock including an estimate of 40 piglets in one night last August. Charges are now pending with the prosecutor's office.

Sushi Bars and Other Business Inspections: Officers planned and carried out a multi-officer emphasis patrol focused on Sushi Bars, markets, and pet stores in the Seattle area. Five teams of two officers inspected over 30 businesses. Uncertified clams, no receipts, no wholesale dealers licenses, and a ton of follow up work were discovered. We learned that all those Sushi Bars that market "fresh fish," actually mean "freshly thawed fish." No fresh product was found at any Sushi Bar!

Fraser Commercial Net Fishery Opportunity Agreement: Following several weeks of discussion, including an in-person meeting held April 27, 2006 with representatives from the purse seine, gill net, and reef net gears, agreement was reached for allocation of opportunity between gear types for the 2006 Fraser River sockeye season. Some of the non-Indian gear representatives argued during the North of Falcon planning process that specific allocation between the reef net, gill net, and purse seine gears was needed to ensure equity and economic viability of the industry. The agreement for the 2006 season is to provide a safeguard against any gear type taking a "disproportionate share" of the sockeye harvest.

Values identifying a disproportionate share were the focus of debate and historical catches were used as a guide in defining problem levels. The one-year agreement will be tested and evaluated following the 2006 season for possible future application. Thanks to the Fish Program's John Long, Tim Flint, and Don Noviello for their help in achieving a successful outcome of these negotiations.

Sturgeon Festival: Staff from Region 5 participated in the Sturgeon Festival, May 20 and 21, at the Water Resources Education Center in Vancouver. Over 1,100 people attended this event, which has been co-sponsored by WDFW and the City of Vancouver for the past ten years. The Festival raises the public's awareness of sturgeon, increases their knowledge of the Columbia River ecosystem, encourages involvement in community-based conservation efforts, and helps to promote recreational fishing.

Public Outreach and Education: WDFW Outreach met with 15 members of the Washington Wildlife Coalition in Ellensburg this past week as part of their regular meeting and to discuss the planning process for next year's Youth Expo. The membership set forth a plan of action that will start the committee building process and the solicitation for further necessary funding. Everyone is enthusiastic about the event.

Yakima "Fishing Kids" Youth Fishing Event: Approximately 650 kids participated in the annual "Fishing Kids" youth fishing event at Sarge Hubbard Pond in downtown Yakima on Saturday, May 20. Attendance was down by about 200 kids from 2005 because of cool, rainy weather in the morning. Nevertheless, the children that fished had a great time and caught a lot of nice trout. WDFW staff on hand to help run the event were District 8 Fish Biologist, Eric Anderson; Region 3 Regional Projects Biologist, Jim Cummins; Youth Fishing Coordinator, Terry Rudnick, and WDFW's new Angler Education Specialist, Keith Underwood. The core volunteer group sponsoring the event was the Mid-Columbia River Walleye Club, which is based in Yakima. One boy who bicycled to the event in the rain from Selah caught two large brood fish (approx. 5 lbs. each) stocked by WDFW's Goldendale Hatchery for the event.

Tri-Cities "Fishing Kids" Event: The annual Tri-Cities "Fishing Kids" youth fishing event was held at Columbia Park Pond in Kennewick on May 6. Approximately 1,250 kids participated (1,075 pre-registered). The pond was stocked with 4,800 catchables from Troutlodge purchased specifically for the event plus another 2,200 catchable rainbows, 400 jumbos (1 lbs. ave.) and 100 large triploids (1.5 lbs. ave.) stocked by WDFW. Consequently, fishing success was very high. A large number of fish were caught (50% +/-), including many of the jumbos and triploids from the April plants. District Fish Biologist, Paul Hoffarth, worked with many volunteers from the Richland Rod & Gun Club prior to the event to assemble the 1,250 fishing poles at the Dist. 4 office. Paul also worked during the event helping teach kids to fish.

Intertidal Shellfish Enhancement: Penrose Point State Park was enhanced with 100,000 hatchery-reared Manila clam "seed." The oyster enhancement plots at Penrose Point State Park and North Bay WDFW Tidelands were marked with buoys in preparation for the upcoming seeding with Pacific oysters. The planned placement of Pacific oyster shell at Liberty Bay WDFW Tidelands was postponed after inspection of the shell, donated to the project by a commercial grower, revealed the presence of live shellfish and other organisms. Pacific oyster shell enhances the amount of suitable setting substrate for native Olympia oysters in the Liberty Bay Tidelands, which is dominated by soft mud.

Intertidal Shellfish Educational Field Outings: Intertidal shellfish staff from WDFW Regions 4 and 6 conducted an educational outing at Ala Spit for State Parks staff, including 22 Park rangers, resource stewards and management staff. The daylong event was part of State Parks' Westside Ecosystem Class. WDFW shellfish biologists explained agency shellfish management techniques and then performed a hands-on mini-survey of the clam population at Ala Spit, demonstrating to rangers how quotas and sport shellfish seasons are set on an annual basis. Park staffers were very appreciative of the chance to learn about the bivalves on their tidelands and how the fisheries are managed. Shellfish biologists and technicians also conducted an educational beach walk at Dosewallips State Park during Free Camping Weekend. About 30 campers learned shellfish identification, harvest regulations and tips on clamming and oystering.

Mexican Geoduck Management: A consortium of Mexican business and government fisheries and enforcement staff visited Washington from southern Baja (Baja Sur) this week to learn about managing geoduck, world market issues, product tracking, enforcement and what makes for successful resource management. The Department of Natural Resources hosted (with interpreters) the meeting with Fish and Wildlife staff from Enforcement and Fish Program as invited guests. Large amounts of geoduck (closely related to the local species) have been discovered on both the west and east coasts of Baja. Baja is divided into a northern and southern state with independent governing bodies. The visiting group was focused mostly on the southern state. They have seen newly discovered species in the past (abalone and lobster) go through boom and bust fisheries and they are interested in developing the geoduck fishery with a better outcome for the long-term. They were able to get the governor of the southern state to halt this developing fishery until they can develop a sustainable harvest strategy, which was the thrust of their visit. Doug Southerland and Jeff Koenings each made a cameo appearance to welcome the entourage and encourage the budding working relationship.

It was interesting to note that some of the players in past local geoduck activity are now in Baja and heavily involved in the exploitation of the new fishery. They are now operating in the northern area of Baja, which has not yet taken the same developmental approach. The officials expressed an interest in any official public court records, regarding local residents that could be shared with the northern Baja government.

Wolfe Property and Shine Tidelands Clam Enhancement: Six hundred thousand hatchery-reared Manila clam "seed" were planted at Wolfe Property and Shine Tidelands State Parks. Volunteers from Washington Sea Grant, Water Watchers, and the Boy Scouts assisted in the seeding and Washington Department of Ecology sent a camera crew to document the enhancement. About 25% of those juvenile clams are expected to survive and grow to legal harvestable size in 2-3 years, at which time they will increase sport harvest opportunity on two of the Region's most popular public beaches.

Lower Columbia River Spring Chinook Salmon Sport Fisheries: The recreational spring Chinook fishery above Bonneville Dam reopened on May 13, since the late run finally materialized - at levels exceeding the pre-season forecast. The upriver spring Chinook count through May 22 at Bonneville Dam was over 95,000 adult fish. Yesterday, the U.S. v. Oregon Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) updated the run size to 125,000 spring Chinook salmon to the Columbia River mouth. Washington Region 5 tributary salmon fisheries -- Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Wind, Drano, White Salmon, and Klickitat - are open under permanent regulations.

FUNDING GOAL:

ENSURE EFFECTIVE USE OF CURRENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WASHINGTON STATE'S FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC

Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) Deadline: Monday, May 1, 2006, was the day to enter all of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Grant Programs into PRISM, IAC's online grant portal. With all of the various grants and application requirements, this process is becoming increasingly time consuming and tedious. The addition of new grant categories this year for renovation and restoration added to the confusion. Much work remains as additional application requirements exist through June and July, followed by formal presentations before evaluation panels for many of the projects in August. Fifteen acquisition projects, 12 State Lands Restoration Grants and 18 State Lands Development Grants were submitted to IAC for project funding on WDFW wildlife areas. Project sponsors will continue to work with IAC staff to provide additional information as needed.

Taxes and Assessments: The Real Estate Services Section completed processing the payments in-lieu of tax (PILT) and other assessments for the 2006 tax year. The 2006 PILT totaled \$435,255.85 and the additional assessments totaled \$243,892.02 for a grand total of \$679,147.87 paid to the counties and special service districts. Payments were made to 30 of the 39 Washington State counties. If you would like to see the details, please contact Jennifer Maze in Real Estate Services.

COMPETENCE GOAL:

IMPLEMENT PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE SOUND AND PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS, CULTIVATE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND BUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND AGENCY CREDIBILITY

Surface Water Diversion and Screening Training: Fish passage and screening inventory field crews and biologists from the TAPPS Division attended a surface water diversion and screening training in Yakima presented by TAPPS Environmental Specialist Pat Schille. This training was timely for the inventory crews that are working primarily in eastern Washington. While most of the features inventoried are culverts, crews are encountering more diversions associated with agriculture and other uses, many of them unscreened or otherwise noncompliant. Pat Schille provided a presentation on diversions, the various diversion screening options available, and what crews should be looking for when assessing them for compliance. Staff visited numerous diversions of various types and sizes, both screened and unscreened, to get an idea of what staff may encounter while conducting inventories. Staff was very pleased with this training.

Clark County Area Habitat Biologist: Anne Friesz has been hired as the new Clark County Area Habitat Biologist. She comes from the Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Lands Program and brings a wealth of information to the program. Care Providers for Oiled Wildlife: The WDFW Oil Spill Team is investigating methods for improving Washington's network of care providers for oiled wildlife. Discussions were held with Dr. Mike Zicardi of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network in California and with the Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS). These are the first of a number of meetings that will occur between WDFW and care providers for oiled wildlife. The meeting with PAWS provided an opportunity to discuss common issues and begin to form a plan for future relationships.

Business Portal Project: WDFW is a participating agency in the Governor's Business Portal Project. The Business Portal is an enhancement to the Access Washington state government web site that will provide better information and services to business owners. WDFW has created new Commercial License content on the WDFW web site that is linked to the Business Portal, to provide commercial fishers with better knowledge and understanding of agency and state requirements. See <http://access.wa.gov/business/index.aspx> for more information.

Turkey Management: Upland Game Section Manager Mick Cope represented Washington State at the annual Western Wild Turkey Committee Meeting held April 17-20, 2006. Topics discussed included hunting season structure, wintertime nuisance and damage in northern climates, western wild turkey research opportunities, avian influenza, habitat improvement projects, and partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service and the Farm Service Agency.

Legislative Tour of School Fire Salvage Operation and Elk Fence Damage: Landowners, County Commissioners, Fish and Wildlife Commissioners, legislative staff, U.S. Forest Service personnel and WDFW staff all participated in a tour of the Wooten Wildlife Area to review elk fence losses and costs associated with rebuilding the elk fence that was destroyed in the School Fire last summer. Landowners were on hand to support rebuilding the fence and urge the group to do whatever is necessary to secure

funds. Landowners have been very supportive of WDFW elk management programs in large part because of the fence. The group also looked at helicopter salvage logging operations underway on the Wooten Wildlife Area, as well as habitat restoration activities along the Tucannon River.

Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) Supports National CRP Priority Area: Don Larsen gave a presentation to the WAWG board of directors regarding potential establishment of a national Conservation Reserve Program priority area for sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse in the western states. The WAWG unanimously passed a resolution of support for including portions of Grant, Douglas, Okanogan, and Lincoln Counties. Don also met with the staff of Senators Murray and Cantwell to discuss the proposal. Both indicated initial support. This has been a somewhat contentious issue, and this stakeholder support will be critical in the federal government's final decision.

WDFW Officers Assist with Various Rescues:

Officers assisted Yakima County Sheriff's Office and the Naches Fire Department with a call of an injured horseback rider several miles off the Oak Creek Road. The horseback rider suffered serious injuries including a possible dislocated hip. Due to the terrain and the condition of the patient, a U.S. Army Med-Evac (MAST) helicopter was requested to hoist the patient out and fly him to the local trauma hospital. Officers assisted by locating, using GPS coordinates, a suitable spot for the helicopter to land and recover the patient.

Officers were the first to respond to the call of tree falling on a person inside the tent camping area of Taidnapam Park on Riffe Lake. An eleven-year-old girl was the victim of a tree falling across a camping tent, trapping her legs as she slept. She was transported to Morton General Hospital and is expected to make a full recovery.

Chelan County Deputies were on the Wenatchee River with their in-board jet boat preparing for the annual "Ridge To River" race when they hit some rocks and partially sank the vessel. Officers responded with the state jet boat and rescued the two deputies from the grounded vessel. A tow truck was summoned and was barely able to remove the boat from the middle of the river. Being short of a vessel for the upcoming event, our Captain contacted the Chelan County Sheriff and offered him the use of our Almar jet boat and an operator. He accepted and then thanked us for our immediate response.

Officers responded to the Hampton Lakes on the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge to assist with the search and rescue efforts of a fisherman that reportedly fell 50-60 feet down a cliff. The 9-1-1 caller claimed that they were holding on to the victim to keep him from falling further down the cliff and that search and rescue would be required to evacuate him from the area. The caller also claimed they were too far in from any roads to help direct rescue efforts in to where the victim was located. Upon arrival, rescue crews located the elderly gentleman approximately 150 feet from the parking area where he had rolled down a steep embankment, rather than a cliff. Other than a few scrapes and bruises, the fisherman was no worse for his ordeal.

Exotic Species: A graduate student monitoring a wetland restoration project on the lower East Fork Lewis River has identified a thriving population of what appears to be an eastern Asian species called the Amur goby (*Rhinogobias brunneus* spp.). The literature suggests that this amphidromous species has a high potential to reproduce and spread into the Columbia River, competing with or preying upon native fishes. Fish program staff assisted Oregon State University (OSU) staff in attempting capture of gobies to confirm identification of the species, and investigate its dispersal, habitat use and food habits, however high water precluded effective sampling. Region 5 Fish management staff will assist OSU in their monitoring efforts in mid-June.

Big Game Management Roundtable (BGMR): Edd Bracken attended a meeting of the steering committee in Ellensburg. Raising funds for the BGMR continues to be a high priority. The group is working on a grant application to the Legends Casino (Yakama Nation), and has submitted an ALEA grant to WDFW. Edd also attended the monthly BGMR meeting at the Washington Cattlemen's office. An update on the stock fence repair efforts with the WCC crew indicates that to date nine miles of fence that was damaged by elk has been repaired for eight different landowners in the eastern part of the Kittitas Valley. The group formed an ad hoc committee to begin addressing issues related to recreation use of the Quilomene and Colockum Wildlife Areas as it relates to damage issues. The group hopes to document the timing and abundance of different types of recreation users and to determine if this use displaces elk from public lands to private lands.

Farm Bill and Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS): The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) national office has directed their state offices to use CWCS plans in developing their Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) plan. Chris Sato helped us provide comments to NRCS. We made it clear that while the CWCS does not include many game species, projects that benefit pheasants, elk, deer, and others (WDFW priority species) are popular with private landowners and appropriate for Farm Bill programs.

Little Chiefs Rule for a Day at Festival Kickoff: Chris Fowler is a popular guy among the ranks of Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife agents. A shiny badge was pinned on the 10-year-old Malaga boy during swearing in ceremonies in Memorial Park. Fowler was one of six youngsters living with a disability or special-needs that were picked to preside over various law enforcement agencies during the fourth annual Chief for a Day program. The event has become the official kickoff for the 11-day Washington State Apple Blossom Festival so there was a big crowd around the park's main stage when Chelan County District Court Judge Tom Warren swore in Fowler and other kids. Chief Bjork called his team of seven wildlife officers up to the stage. He told Fowler as chief for a day he could command them to any official task. Fowler suffers from delayed development due to the seizures and brain surgery he's been through, but he knew just what to do; "Take the day off," he told the enforcers when handed the microphone by Bjork. "And have a party." It was much like a party for close to 100 law enforcers who gathered to salute children with special needs. Officers from the Washington State Patrol (WSP), Chelan and Douglas county sheriff's departments and Wenatchee and East Wenatchee police departments each picked a local child to shine through a day of special treatment. Each of the kids, aged 5 to 15, wore a uniform from his or her agency. The six were bused across town led by a convoy of

sirens-blaring WSP motorcycles and other police vehicles. Once they reached the park a patrolman playing bagpipes led the six kids - two of them in wheel chairs - through a rank and file of dozens of applauding officers and others. A Chelan County Sheriff's Department helicopter buzzed the park.

After the event, Benito Amezcua's entire Mission View Elementary School kindergarten class swarmed his wheelchair to congratulate him and see the badge handed him by Sheriff Mike Harum.

Jordan Broderson, 15, looked good in his patrolman's uniform as he posed for photos on a patrolman's official motorcycle. "He loved being a patrolman for a day, he said, but didn't really care to be a police officer when he grew up. He prefers to work at a golf course, in spite of his cerebral palsy; he uses a special grip and his scores have dipped into the 90s for 18 holes," Brette Sangster said about her golf-obsessed son. "I wouldn't want to put people in jail," Jordan said. "I saw them on TV and they couldn't get out."

Officers Save Public From Risk of Polluted Clams: While on patrol in Mason County, Officers observed a boat anchored near the beach in front of the Shelton Sewage Treatment Plant. After observing the boat for a short time, a man appeared on the other side of the boat. Officers observed the subject digging clams and placing them in commercial mesh clam sacks. The beach is heavily contaminated with sewage and other nasty stuff and is closed for commercial digging by the Department of Health. Officers called for assistance with the contact and snuck down to the beach along the fence line at the sewage plant and maintained a visual on the harvester until assistance arrived. Officers snuck to within 50 yards of the subject and then started advancing on him. When they got to 25-30 feet the subject looked up and then made a dash for his boat that was anchored in 3.5 feet of water. The subject refused all verbal commands to stop and was pursued into the water. The subject reached his boat and flopped into the bow, which was full of dirty clams in bags. The subject was trying to get his boat started to flee as officers continued into the water, reached the boat and pulled themselves aboard as the subject was reaching for the ignition. Still refusing verbal commands, the subject was taken down and handcuffed. An estimated 400-500 lbs. of dirty clams were aboard the boat. The subject is a Squaxin Tribe member and had been arrested several weeks prior by tribal police for the same thing in a different area. The tribe deferred to the state for prosecution and the man was booked into jail for harvesting for commercial purposes from a de-certified beach (felony), no certification tags, and resisting arrest. A total of 468 lbs. of contaminated clams were prevented from reaching the markets for consumption. The subject refused to disclose his buyer. A search warrant was written for the subject's vehicle for any documents or receipts. The boat, truck and trailer were confiscated for forfeiture.

Trojan Implosion: In making preparations for closing Department lands during the Trojan Implosion, Officers discovered that the residents of Sportsman's Loop Development at the mouth of the Kalama River had done considerable work with heavy equipment on Department lands. They removed a large amount of vegetation and trees creating a large parking area next to the river and directly across from the Trojan plant. Coincidentally, the group expected 300 to 400 "guests" to view the implosion. After several interviews and discussions, Officers made it clear to the residents that Department lands would closed to all public access during the operation. An emergency closure was implemented and signs

posted. Officers were present at the site and in the area. A total of nine Officers were involved on land, in the command post, and on the water assisting Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office, WSP, and USCG with security.

Successful Emphasis Included Commissioner: Fifteen officers, aboard six patrol boats, participated in Operation ELONGATUS. The emphasis was directed to enforcement of recreational lingcod and shrimp openings between Tacoma and the Canadian Border. WDFW Commissioner Solomon was aboard WDFW#6 for a patrol of the San Juan Islands with Sgt. Mullins and Capt. Anderson. Hundreds of contacts were made during the emphasis and dozens of citations were issued for a wide variety of violations. The most common violations were related to the lingcod fishery (undersize, barbed hooks). Sgt. Mullins, Sgt. Ward and Officer Allen initiated one contact where a Lummi Tribal member was shrimp fishing outside the area opened by his subsistence permit aboard a vessel operated by a non-tribal person who did not have a shellfish license. The owner was cited for unlawful participation in a tribal fishery among other charges. The third person aboard had a felony warrant and was transported and booked into San Juan County Jail. Officer Allen will refer the tribal charges to Lummi Law and Order. Special thanks go to Sgt. Ward and Capt. Anderson for helping make the emphasis a success.

Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator (NWCO) Award: Officers presented Carl and Sylvia Jensen of Black Diamond with an award of appreciation for their service as NWCO's, commitment to the fish and wildlife resource, and special support and assistance to the agency staff in King County for over 30 years.

Annual Estimates Of Salmonid Escapement: Annual estimates of salmonid escapement are a key agency performance measure and the foundation for fisheries management and recovery planning. Web-based software slated for completion in June 2006 will assure that staff can efficiently report data and that all staff can access a consistent, corporate dataset. Development of the web-based software has reached several important milestones: a) workshops for project scoping convened for regions 1, 3, and 6; b) SQL Serve database constructed; and c) Matrix of Accountability completed for stocks in Region 3. The Matrix of Accountability is a key feature that assures that a data steward is identified for each stock. Next steps in the project are to complete the Matrix of Accountability for all regions and complete the web software.

Ocean Policy Working Group: IRM staff attended the Ocean Policy Working Group meeting the last week of April 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the proposed outreach effort, adopt an outline for the final report (due December 31, 2006), and receive updates on the progress of the different subcommittees.

WDFW is the lead agency for the Marine Resource Stewardship Subcommittee that is addressing the following topics: 1) sustainable fisheries; 2) ecosystem-based management; 3) aquaculture; and 4) coastal energy projects (e.g., wave technology). IRM, Fish Program, and Region 6 staff have collectively, drafted a report describing the status of Washington's coastal fisheries report to be included in the Marine Resource Stewardship section of the state's Ocean Policy final report.

There has been, and will continue to be, a series of public meetings in the coastal communities to solicit input from the public on the current status of the ocean, ocean management issues, and recommendations to address them. The meetings have/will occur at the following dates and locations: May 10 (Forks); May 11 (Port Angeles); May 19 (Ocean Shores); May 23 (Ilwaco); May 24 (Westport); June 7 (Friday Harbor); and June 9 (Olympia). Most of these public meetings occur in the evenings. The actual times and locations are posted on the Ocean Policy website: <http://courses.washington.edu/oceangov/OPWG.html>. During the public meetings held so far the Working Group has heard concerns regarding dredging needs not being met, location of dredge dumping, the need for habitat protection from coastal development, and the need for adequate disaster response (e.g., oil spills, tsunamis). The Working Group will collate all of the input received and will incorporate these issues into the final report.

HRMS: WDFW will go live on the new state HRMS with the July 10, 2006, payroll. HRMS is the new state payroll and personnel system designed to meet the requirements of collective bargaining. A lot of concentrated work at WDFW in May and June will lead up to this change. WDFW is part of the second and final group of agencies to make the change to the new system. Payroll, Personnel, and Information Technology Services are jointly leading the agency in making the new system successful at WDFW. New rules such as reporting hours twice a month and adapting to different pay and leave types will be challenging to employees. HRMS has a completely new approach to recording employee time and running the payroll. To help make the transition easier, WDFW is implementing a new automated, internet-based time sheet system. This is a cooperative project with the Employment Security Department and will make filing and approving time sheets faster and easier for employees and the payroll office.

SCIENCE GOAL:

PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOUND AND OBJECTIVE SCIENCE TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING

Olympic Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Region Habitat Review: Olympia and Region 6 staff coordinated a field review on Rayonier lands in DNR's Olympic Region to identify wetland-associated habitat used by salmonids. Accurate identification of these critical habitats features has been an ongoing concern. These habitat features are often used seasonally for refugia habitat during winter flood events. The Department had numerous concerns with DNR's interpretation of forest practice rules, and a list of issues was generated for policy clarification. The field review was part of WDFW's ongoing effort to develop open communication between resource managers, DNR and industrial landowners.

Small Forest Landowners Long-term Alternate Plans: Staff has been participating in the stakeholder process to develop long-term management plans and associated Forest Practice permits for small forest landowners (SFLO) through the Forests & Fish Alternate Plan process. The current permit is for a maximum of 5 years. The group will be working on issues associated with trying to initiate a 15-year permit. Long-term watershed plans are being encouraged as an incentive for SFLO to stay in long-term forestry by giving them economic relief and allow for market flexibility. Plans may cover large tracks of

acreage or the landowner's entire ownership. Policy and technical staff participated in the review of the first two long-term alternate plan proposals. Five-year plans were submitted for forestlands in Kitsap and Thurston counties. Landowner proposals included buffer reduction on seasonal streams, providing small buffers on non-fish streams to accommodate wildlife leave tree requirements, and utilizing break in slope strategies to protect unstable slopes and provide fish habitat protection.

Fish Barrier Inventories: Staff are coordinating with and collecting fish passage barrier inventory datasets from Clark Conservation District, Mason Conservation District, and Pend Oreille Conservation District. The data were collected using Salmon Recovery Funding Board grants and submitted to WDFW for technical review and assistance before integration with our corporate Fish Passage database. There are over 2,700 new barrier locations that will be added pending our current review.

Citizen Science Projects: Staff worked on a project with Sunnyside School involving an ongoing nest box project along the Yakima River on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. Staff gave a fish and wildlife presentation to two 5th-grade classes that will culminate as a field day to check the nest boxes in late May. Staff also participated in the Fort Simcoe State Park cavity nester monitoring study and collaborated in working up a protocol with State Parks and the Yakama Nation to monitor nest cavity use in the large oak trees at the historic fort. Yakima Audubon Society is doing the surveys using the protocols staff developed. The cavity nesting monitoring study will provide data for State Parks to use in their lands management.

Mountain Goat Research: Cliff Rice flew with the Department's pilot to check on and download data from mountain goats in the southern and eastern Cascades. We located 17 of the 18 collared mountain goats in the areas covered and obtained downloads from all but 2. So far, we have not seen any over-winter mortalities.

Second Wolverine Capture: Scott Fitkin and Jeff Heinlen assisted with the capture of a second wolverine at Hart's Pass. The animal was captured Tuesday, April 16, 2006, and radio-marked and released the following day. The animal was traveling with the first animal captured a month ago (Melanie). Early data returned suggests the animal has already traveled north to Manning Park in Canada, much like Melanie after her capture. The little data we have suggests these animals are ranging a large area of the Cascade Crest, spanning both sides of the border. Hopefully, the improved collar will give us data for months to come and help us better understand wolverine ecology in this area. In general, this winter's pilot effort was as much as we could have hoped for with the two captures, and the trapping effort is finished for the season. Project partners will all be looking for additional funding to continue the capture effort next winter. Additional details on the recent capture are contained in the text below provided by principal investigator, Dr. Keith Aubry.

"Great news from the world of Washington's wolverines! Because we were getting wolverine tracks near the trap during the last few weeks, but not catching any wolverines, John Rohrer had the brilliant idea of setting up a remote camera to at least get a picture of the animal visiting the traps. On Tuesday, the field crew found two sets of tracks near the trap and also that (1) we had captured a male wolverine that was either a sub adult or young adult (probably 2-4 years old - there is no definitive way to age

wolverines precisely, even with *cementum annuli*), who we radio-collared yesterday with a refurbished and strengthened radio-collar that will hopefully stay on his neck (we have determined that the original collars we got had serious design flaws), and (2) obtained clear pictures of a wolverine wearing 2 bright yellow ear tags - Melanie! So, not only is she alive and well, and has returned to Hart's Pass from Canada (for those who don't know, the signals indicated that one week after we collared her, she had moved 55 air miles north into Manning Provincial Park, and either died or sloughed her collar), but was traveling with a male. So, we may have collared the resident male in that area (though he could also be a transient) and, hopefully, we can now begin to gather data on wolverine occurrence, movements, and habitat use in the North Cascades."

Wildlife Meetings: John Pierce attended a workshop in Portland, sponsored by the Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Working Group, designed to strengthen partnership with federal, state, local, and private entities toward biodiversity monitoring. The workshop was attended by an invited list of interested parties at the policy and technical levels. Major outcomes of the meeting were: 1) reinforcement of the importance of a partnership, 2) identification of working partnership models that could be used to for biodiversity monitoring, and 3) the need to work together with other existing partnerships developed for salmon recovery (e.g. Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership).

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Program/Steelhead Monitoring on Yellowhawk Creek: For many years the Tri-State Steelheaders RFEG, along with very dedicated volunteers, have maintained a fish-counting weir on Yellowhawk Creek to monitor steelhead passage. Recently, at the request of fish managers, a motion-sensitive camera was added to eliminate the need to handle the fish (provided by U.S. Army Corp.). Steelheaders, staff and volunteers still visit the site daily to review camera footage [steelhead have already been seen, along with other fish and critters] and to perform any necessary maintenance. The group hopes to add a second camera in Mill Creek, which will provide exact counts of fish entering into Upper Mill Creek.

Crab Pot Rot Cord Study: Region 4 and 6 crab management biologists initiated a crab pot rot cord study with the assistance of the Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PTMSC). The study was designed by the Snohomish Marine Resource Committee to test the durability of seven different types of natural line used as rot cord in shellfish pots in Washington. One type of cotton/polyester line is also being tested. WDFW presently requires the use of 100% cotton or other natural fiber to be used as a biodegradable device on shellfish pots. It is assumed that this natural fiber will degrade over time, so that if pots are lost, the derelict pots will lose the ability to retain crab, shrimp and other marine organisms. The study will measure how long it takes for the different types and three different arrangements (escape panels, and links to escape rings and tie-down straps) of rot cord to degrade. The test gear was set off the dock at the PTMSC and will be tested for durability once a week, until the rot cord fails.

Implementation of CWT Expert Panel Recommendations: Fishery impacts on natural stocks are monitored through the Coded Wire Tag (CWT) system on indicator hatchery stocks. An Expert Panel reviewed the CWT system and produced a report of general Findings and Recommendations for how to improve this management tool. Subsequently, an implementation workgroup was convened to develop

an action plan addressing the short-term tasks related to the first four general recommendations of the Expert Panel. The workgroup will move through its charge by identifying quality control/assurance issues, programs where sampling needs are not met, sampling options for improving upon current precision, and if time allows, a review of the indicator stock assumption (that natural and indicator hatchery stocks experience the same exploitation rate patterns). The workgroup has participated in several conference calls that laid out a plan and work assignments for identifying quality control/assurance issues. One of the key assignments will be summarizing escapement-sampling programs. WDFW is currently in discussions with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to obtain funding for WDFW staff to collect and summarize escapement-sampling data. WDFW would also collect and summarize fisheries sampling data from WDFW, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for use by the workgroup. This work is ongoing and the workgroup is expected to report initial action plan recommendations by August 1, 2006, with a final report due in October 2006.